

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release
June 22, 2006

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Kewanee Man Charged with Federal Drug and Firearms Crimes

Rock Island, IL- The United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois, Rodger A. Heaton, announced that a federal grand jury today returned an indictment charging John Robert Skovronski, age 48, of 1430 North East Street, Kewanee, Illinois, with cultivating marijuana and possessing and carrying firearms – including a sawed-off shotgun – during those drug trafficking crimes.

U.S. Attorney Heaton stated, “It is a sad fact that guns and drugs frequently go hand in hand in today’s society. We must make every effort to protect our citizens by destroying this partnership.”

The indictment alleges that Skovronski manufactured, attempted to manufacture, distributed, and possessed with intent to distribute, over 1,000 marijuana plants from June 2003 through June 16, 2006. Counts two through four allege that Skovronski possessed a .357 magnum revolver, .22 caliber revolver, .22 caliber bolt-action rifle, 20-gauge shotgun, 16-gauge shotgun, .22 caliber rifle, and a .410-gauge shotgun in furtherance of the marijuana-manufacturing offense. Count five further alleges that the .410 shotgun possessed by Skovronski had a barrel length of only 11 inches; federal law requires that it be 18 inches or more or that it be registered under the National Firearm Registration and Transfer Record.

The charges are the result of an investigation by the Illinois State Police’s Blackhawk Area Task Force, the Illinois State Police’s Zone 2 Methamphetamine Response Team, and the Kewanee Police Department. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Sara Darrow under the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative.

If convicted for the offense of manufacturing, distribution, or possession with intent to distribute 1,000 or more marijuana plants, Skovronski faces a statutory penalty of at least 10 years up to life in prison. For possession of a firearm during a drug trafficking offense, conviction requires a mandatory five-year term of imprisonment which must be served consecutive to any term imposed for the underlying drug trafficking offense. If convicted of the possession of a sawed-off shotgun during a drug trafficking offense, Skovronski faces a mandatory ten-year term of imprisonment which must also be served consecutive to any term of imprisonment imposed upon conviction of the underlying drug trafficking offense. The penalty upon conviction for the possession of a sawed-off shotgun is up to 10 years in prison.

Members of the public are reminded that an indictment is merely an accusation; the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

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